

Message Text

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O 062040Z MAY 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 116311

NODIS

FOL RPT HELSINKI 1389 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DTD 06 MAY 78

QUOTE: S E C R E T HELSINKI 1389

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS:
NSC - DR. BRZEZINSKI - IMMEDIATE
ACDA - AMBASSADOR WARNKE - IMMEDIATE
DOD/SECRETARY OF DEFENSE - IMMEDIATE
DOD/JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF - IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW - IMMEDIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM PCAT US UR
SUBJECT: US/SOVIET CAT: SUMMARY OF MAY 6IPLINARY SESSION

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT THE MAY 6 PLENARY SESSION US
DELEGATION HEAD GELB BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION BY RESPONDING
TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL ON POLITICAL AND LEGAL CRITERIA.

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HE SUGGESTED THAT THE CRITERIA ADVANCED BY THE SOVIET
SIDE WERE MEANINGFUL ONLY IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT. GELB
ILLUSTRATED THE US VIEW DURING A LONG AND LENGTHY PRE-
SENTATION (FULL REPORT FOLLOWS) WHICH ALSO INCLUDED
FURTHER ELABORATION OF THE US GUIDELINES APPROACH IN-
CORPORATING US-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS TRANSFER
MATTERS. GELB ALSO DEVELOPED THE REGIONAL APPROACH,

CITING BOTH THE HORN AND LATIN AMERICA--REGIONS OF HIGH AND LOW TENSIONS RESPECTIVELY--WHERE COOPERATIVE SOVIET-AMERICAN RESTRAINT EFFORTS WOULD FURTHER BILATERAL RELATIONS.

THE SOVIET SIDE ASKED WHETHER, UNDER THE CONSULTATIONS PROPOSED BY THE US, THE SIDES WOULD HAVE CONSULTED FIFTEEN YEARS AGO ON US TRANSFERS TO ETHIOPIA OR ONE YEAR AGO ON US TRANSFERS TO ISRAEL OR SOVIET TRANSFERS TO SYRIA? GELB INDICATED THAT IF THE SIDES AGREED ON A REGION FOR CONSULTATION, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO TALK ABOUT SUCH THINGS, AT LEAST IN GENERAL TERMS. THE SOVIETS DID NOT RESPOND TO THE REGIONAL APPROACH OTHER THAN TO INDICATE THAT THE "SEMINAR LIKE" DISCUSSION HAD BEEN A GOOD ONE AND RAISED MANY INTERESTING POINTS.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION, THE SOVIETS TABLED A FORMAL PROPOSAL WHICH HAD THE APPROVAL OF SENIOR OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW. THE PROPOSAL CALLED FOR A BILATERAL AGREEMENT TO BAN ARMS TRANSFERS WHICH WERE EXCESSIVE TO THE NORMAL SELF-DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS OF STATES BORDERING ONE ANOTHER. THIS WOULD PREVENT THE ACCUMULATION OF EXCESSIVE STOCKPILES WHICH, WHILE NOT

A DANGER TO EITHER OF US, NEVERTHELESS CREATED A PROBLEM.

THE USSR SAW THREE ADVANTAGES IN SUCH A PRO-
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POSAL. FIRST, IT COULD BE CARRIED OUT ON A BILATERAL BASIS. SECOND, IT WOULD DAMPEN REGIONAL ARMS RACES AND ENHANCE STABILITY. THIRD, IT COULD LEAD TO REDUCTIONS IN THE SCALE OF INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS.

THE SOVIETS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS PROPOSAL WAS SEPARATE FROM THE ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS. THE SOVIETS ALSO ASKED THAT THE US SIDE STUDY THE PROPOSAL CAREFULLY AND PROVIDE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE.

AS A PRELIMINARY RESPONSE, GELB REJECTED THE PROPOSAL AS OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE SERIOUS SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF THE DISCUSSIONS UP TO THAT TIME. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD REFER IT TO HIS GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION.

ACTION RECOMMENDATION: ALL AGENCIES REPRESENTED ON THE US DELEGATION ARE AGREED THAT THE PROPOSAL IS NOT A SERIOUS ONE AND THAT IT SHOULD BE FORMALLY REJECTED. WE BELIEVE THIS CAN BE DONE WITHOUT PUTTING THE REST OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AT RISK (NOTE SOVIETS SAID THIS COULD BE KEPT SEPARATE). THIS WOULD HELP ESTABLISH THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS ENTERPRISE. ACCORDINGLY, WE REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS BY OOB MONDAY,

MAY 8TH DIRECTING US TO CONVEY A FORMAL USG REJECTION
OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL. END SUMMAY. RIDGWAY UNQUOTE
CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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